

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

By means of the present amendment, the current Abstract has been amended as shown in the enclosed Replacement Abstract to place it in better form.

In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claims 2-11, 14, 16-18, 20 and 22-27 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication that claims 2-11, 14, 16-18, 20 and 22-27 contain allowable subject matter. By means of the present amendment, claims 2, 16 and 22 have been canceled without prejudice, and claims 1, 15 and 21 have been amended to include the features of allowable claims 2, 16 and 22. Further, claims 3-5, 10-11, 14, and 23-26 have been rewritten in independent form.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1, 3-5, 10-11, 14-15, 21, 23-26 are in allowable form, and allowance thereof is respectfully requested. In addition, it is respectfully submitted that claims 6-9, 12-13, 17-20 and 27 should also be allowed at least based on their dependence from independent claims 1, 3, 5, 15 and 26.

PATENT
Serial No. 09/954,643
Amendment in Reply to Office Action of April 15, 2004

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

If any informalities remain, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned in order to expedite allowance.

Please charge any fee deficiencies and credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 14-1270.

Respectfully submitted,

By Dicran Halajian
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August 11, 2004

Enclosure: Replacement Abstract

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

It is hereby certified that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first-class mail in an envelope addressed to:

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On August 11, 2004
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By Matali A. Mengo
(Signature)